

The Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A material comprising:

a nonwoven web comprising a plurality of substantially continuous as formed z-direction fibers having a z-direction orientation and forming a plurality of closed loops of fibers between both x-y plane surfaces of the nonwoven web, the closed loops defining open spaces within the web and being formed without pleating of the web.

2. (Currently Amended) A lofty material comprising:

a nonwoven web comprising a plurality of substantially continuous as formed z-direction fibers,

the web being a lofted web with x, y and z dimensions, with x being the machine direction, y being the cross machine direction and z being the loft direction;

the web having first and second major surfaces in x-y planes and spaced apart in the z direction;

the continuous fibers being folded to form closed loops of fibers extending in the z direction, the closed loops defining open spaces within the web, and

the closed loops combining to form a material with a succession of channels spaced along the machine direction, each channel running in the cross machine direction and being formed without pleating of the web.

3. (Previously Presented) The material according to Claim 2 further including

each closed loop having at least one of a leading or trailing edge bonded to an adjacent closed loop leading or trailing edge to thereby hold its z-direction shape.

4. (Previously Presented) The material according to Claim 3 wherein the leading and trailing edges of one closed loop are bonded together.

5. (Previously Presented) The material according to Claim 3 wherein the leading and trailing edges of one closed loop are bonded together and bonded to the trailing and leading edges of the adjacent closed loops, respectively.

6. (Previously Presented) The material according to Claim 2 further including each closed loop being substantially elliptically shaped in cross section between the major surfaces.

7. (Previously Presented) The material according to Claim 2 further including: the closed loops being oriented off the orthogonal z- axis and being unidirectional.

8. (Previously Presented) The material according to Claim 2 further including: the closed loops being oriented off the orthogonal z- axis and being multi-directional.

9. (Original) The material according to Claim 2 further including: the first major surface being preponderantly closed.

10. (Original) The material according to Claim 2 further including: the second major surface being preponderantly closed.

11. (Previously Presented) The material according to Claim 2 further including:
the channels being randomly spaced in the machine direction.

12. (Previously Presented) The material according to Claim 2 further including:
the channels being regularly spaced in the machine direction.

13. (Previously Presented) The material according to Claim 2 further including:
the channels being of random length in the cross machine direction.

14. (Previously Presented) The material according to Claim 2 further including:
the channels being of regular length in the cross machine direction.

15.-28. (Cancelled)

29. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with Claim 25, wherein the first
moving surface is a forming surface on which the fibers are formed.

30. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with Claim 25 wherein the fibers
are lightly bonded.

31. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with Claim 25, wherein the
nonwoven material is bonded by at least one of an adhesive bonding process and a thermal
bonding process.

32. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with Claim 25, wherein the first moving surface and the second moving surface are perforate.

33. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with Claim 32, wherein the material is transferred from the first moving surface to the second moving surface using a controlled vacuum whereby the material is pulled in a direction of the second moving surface.

34. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with Claim 33, wherein the material is transferred from the first moving surface to the second moving surface using a positive air pressure whereby the material is pushed in a direction of the second moving surface.

35. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with Claim 25, wherein at least one additional material is applied to a face of the base material, forming a composite or laminate.

36. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with Claim 25 wherein the first moving surface and second moving surface face opposing directions.

37. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with Claim 36 wherein the first moving surface and second moving surface have no directly opposing faces to form a channel.

38. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with Claim 25, wherein the continuous fibers comprise a plurality of thermoplastic fibers.

39. (Currently Amended) A personal care absorbent article comprising:

a nonwoven web comprising a plurality of substantially continuous as formed z-direction fibers having a z-direction orientation and forming a plurality of closed loops of fibers between both x-y plane surfaces of the nonwoven web, the closed loops defining open spaces within the web and being formed without pleating of the web.

40. (Original) A personal care absorbent article in accordance with Claim 39, wherein the nonwoven web further comprises an absorbent.

41.(Currently Amended) A filtration material comprising: a nonwoven web comprising a plurality of substantially continuous as formed z-direction fibers having a z-direction orientation and forming a plurality of closed loops of fibers at at least one surface of the nonwoven web, the closed loops defining open spaces within the web and being formed without pleating of the web.

42. (Original) A filtration material in accordance with Claim 41, wherein a support structure is attached to at least one face of the nonwoven web.

43. (Currently Amended) A material comprising:
a nonwoven web comprising a plurality of substantially continuous as formed z-direction fibers having a z-direction orientation and forming a plurality of closed loops of fibers between both x-y plane surfaces of the nonwoven web, the loops combining in the cross direction to form a channel within the web running in the cross machine direction of the material and being formed without pleating of the web.

44. (Currently Amended) A lofty material comprising:

a nonwoven web comprising a plurality of substantially continuous as formed z-direction fibers,

the web being a lofted web with x, y and z dimensions, with x being the machine direction, y being the cross machine direction and z being the loft direction;

the web having first and second major surfaces in x-y planes and spaced apart in the z direction;

the continuous fibers being folded to form loops of fibers extending in the z direction, the loops defining open spaces within the web, and

the loops combining in the cross direction to form a succession of channels spaced along the machine direction, each channel running in the cross machine direction of the material and being formed without pleating of the web.

45. (Currently Amended) A personal care absorbent article comprising:

a nonwoven web comprising a plurality of substantially continuous as formed z-direction fibers having a z-direction orientation and forming a plurality of loops of fibers between both x-y plane surfaces of the nonwoven web, the loops aggregating in the cross direction to define a series of open channels within the web extending in the cross direction of the web and being formed without pleating of the web.

46. (Currently Amended) A filtration material comprising: a nonwoven web comprising a plurality of substantially continuous as formed z-direction fibers having a z-direction orientation and forming a plurality of loops of fibers at at least one surface of the nonwoven web,

the closed loops aggregating in the cross direction to define open spaces within the web extending in the cross direction of the web and being formed without pleating of the web.